

Background:

In 1989, the North Dakota Legislature passed the Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Law, which authorized the Department of Human Services to develop, administer, and implement a program of protective services for vulnerable adults.

Each regional human service center has an Elder Services Unit, which is responsible for vulnerable adult protective services, as well as other services.

Protection of vulnerable adults seeks to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to promote self-care and independence.

State Law:

A vulnerable adult is defined as any person older than age 18, or emancipated by marriage who has a substantial mental or functional impairment.

ND Century Code 50-25.2-03 states that any person who reasonably believes that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, may report the information to the Department of Human Services or to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

The law gives the department the right to assess and to provide or arrange the provision of adult protective services, if the vulnerable adult consents to and accepts the services. The department may pursue administrative, legal, or other remedies authorized by law, which are necessary and appropriate under the circumstances to protect a vulnerable adult who cannot give consent, and to prevent further abuse or neglect.

Did You Know:

Adult children, other family members, church communities, and other informal support systems help meet the needs of many people. **Individuals who receive vulnerable adult protective services often lack these informal supports.**

Statistics:**Vulnerable Adult Services**

October 2004 – September 2005

- 515 New cases
- 368 Information and referral calls
- 199 Brief services (Required up to 2 hours of staff time to resolve. For example, helping a family locate needed services.)
- 457 Cases closed
- 7,650 hours spent on information and referral, brief services, and cases

NOTES:

- A clarification in reporting occurred. Case data should not be compared to data prior to the 2003-2004 federal fiscal year.
- A new case does not mean a person has not been served before. Recidivism is common. Abilities change over time, and concerns about neglect or abuse may resurface.

Referral Reasons

- 62% Self-neglect
- 17% Neglect
- 10% Abuse
- 11% Financial exploitation

Referral Sources

- 26% Agency
- 29% Medical/Home Health
- 16% Family
- 20% Community
- 5% Legal/Judicial
- 4% Self

Priority of Request

- 85% Non-emergency
- 7% Emergency
- 8% Imminent danger

See Side 2:

- Demographic Characteristics
- How Calls Are Handled
- Contacts

**Vulnerable Adult
Protective Services
Demographic Data**
October 2004 – September 2005

General

- 74% were age 60 and older
- 52% were female
- 95% were Caucasian
- 3% were American Indian/Native Alaskan

Marital Status

- 64% single/widow/widower
- 20% married
- 14% divorced
- 2% separated

Living Arrangements

- 61% live alone
- 32% live with a spouse or other family member
- 7% live with non-relatives

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia

- 69% Did not have dementia
- 31% Do have some sort of dementia

Reasons for Case Closure:

- 24% Referred to another agency
- 15% Moved out of the area, received protective arrangements, or died
- 14% Client refused services
- 9% Placed in long-term care facility
- 11% Referred to home & community-based services
- 27% Other

Another Resource:

North Dakota Senior Info Line
1-800-451-8693
www.ndseniorinfo.com

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N.D. Department of Human Services
Aging Services Division
600 E Boulevard, Department 325
Bismarck N.D. 58505-0250
Phone: 701-328-4601 TTY: 701-328-3480
www.nd.gov/humanservices

Adult Protection in Practice:

- A **vulnerable adult has the right** to make decisions on his or her own behalf until he or she delegates responsibility voluntarily to another, or the court grants responsibility to another.
- **When interests compete**, a competent individual's decision supercedes community concerns about safety, landlord concerns about property, or family concerns about health or finances.
- **A person can choose** to live "in harm" or even self-destructively, if she or he is competent to choose, does not harm others, and commits no crimes. (Each year, about 15 percent of the people offered vulnerable adult protective services in N.D. refuse them.)
- **Protection of vulnerable adults seeks to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to promote self-care and independence.**

How Calls Are Handled:

When a Regional Human Service Center receives a call about suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults:

- **Staff assess the situation** via phone to determine if an emergency exists.
- **Staff work with law enforcement.**
- If it is not an emergency, but requires more than providing information and referral, **staff may conduct a site visit** to assess the situation and assure appropriate services are offered.
- If appropriate, **staff may offer services** to the vulnerable person such as home-delivered meals, personal care assistance, respite care, or other services.

Human Service Center

Contact Information:

Bismarck	701-328-8888	888-328-2662
Devils Lake	701-665-2200	888-607-8610
Dickinson	701-227-7500	888-227-7525
Fargo	701-298-4500	888-342-4900
Grand Forks	701-795-3000	888-256-6742
Jamestown	701-253-6300	800-260-1310
Minot	701-857-8500	888-470-6968
Williston	701-774-4600	800-231-7724